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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (07/09): Palestinian Papers Report on U.S. Statements Denying Settlements "Deal"

Main Stories:

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida and al-Ayyam lead with and Al-Quds front pages a report on statements by US State Department spokesman Ian Kelly that there is no "deal" between Israel and the US regarding the continuation of settlement construction in the West Bank. Kelly denied reports published in Israeli daily Maariv alleging that the US approved the construction of 2500 housing units in settlements in the West Bank. The papers report that Kelly reiterated that the US has not changed its position regarding the cessation of settlements, emphasizing that all parties have to fulfill their obligations and commitments.

Al-Quds leads with a report that an Egyptian delegation will arrive in Ramallah on July 9 to meet with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, Fatah leaders, and members of Palestinian factions in an attempt to discuss a comprehensive proposal by Egypt that aims at ending the Palestinian division. The proposal reportedly also includes arranging a truce with Israel and releasing the kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. The delegation previously met with Hamas leaders in Damascus.

All dailies report on their front pages on statements by Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad during the weekly cabinet meeting. Responding to recent moves by Israel to confiscate up to 139,000 dunums of unregistered Palestinian land for the construction of new settlements, Fayyad called on the US administration to intervene and exert pressure on Israel regarding continued land confiscations and expansion of settlements, including stopping "natural growth."

Al-Quds runs a front page report of an opinion poll recently conducted by the Arab World Center for Research and Development

(AWRAD) in the West Bank and Gaza, assessing whether Palestinians prefer Fatah or Hamas. According to the poll, President Mahmoud Abbas is more popular among Palestinians than Hamas's Gaza leader Ismail Haniyeh. The results also show that the current Palestinian government led by Prime Minister Salam Fayyad is considered more legitimate than the Hamas government in Gaza.

BLOCK QUOTES:

1) Naji Shurrah, Al-Quds, "What matters is not what Netanyahu says, but what we do ourselves" (07/09): "Israel knows what it wants, and has a clear vision and well defined ideology... However, the question remains, what do we want as Palestinians? We have no clue what we want, and this explains our failure to form a Palestinian government to end our internal division. Ultimately, a lack of vision serves no one but Netanyahu... we will therefore end up with no state and no solution."

2) Talal Okal, Al-Ayyam, "They unite and we divide" (07/09): "Despite all the Israeli crimes and violations committed against the Palestinians, not a single Arab country dared to seriously consider imposing sanctions against Israel...On the contrary, we see that Arab countries have strengthened relations with Israel. This is what gives Israel more power to keep arguing for a solution that will give Palestinians minimal rights in any future state."

WALLES